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ABSTRACT

Most of the debate among the behavioral sciences about the interaction between choice of sexual object and personality characteristics has dealt with male homosexuality. To explore the personality variables of female homosexuals, 46 heterosexual and 46 homosexual women took the California Psychological Inventory. Comparison of the results indicated a personality pattern difference between homosexual and heterosexual women; however, most of the differences were slight. Neither group showed pathological personality patterns, supporting the contention that homosexuality as a clinical entity does not exist. On an individual basis, homosexual and heterosexual profiles could not be distinguished. The findings suggest that further research with a larger and more diversified sample is needed. (JAC)

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PERSONALITY VARIABLES IN FEMALE HOMOSEXUALITY

presented to

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by

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There has been debate among the behavioral sciences about the interaction between choice of sexual object and personality characteristics. Most of this discourse has revolved around the dynamics of male homosexuality with little attention devoted to female homosexuality. This paper will explore the personality variables of females who have chosen members of their own sex as love objects.

There are perhaps two major causes for differences in personality between homosexual and heterosexual women; (1) various psychological theorists have proposed developmental factors as causative agents in producing both the personality differences and the related homosexual behavior; (2) society places certain pressures and restrictions on homosexual individuals which are quite different from those experienced by the heterosexual person. Thus, some authorities would subscribe to the view that it is the strictures placed on homosexual individuals which cause any personality differences between the two groups. This paper will restrict itself to the investigation of the personality differences between female homosexuals and female heterosexuals as proposed by psychological theorists.

There are many ways of defining the term homosexuality. Definitions may be in terms of overt behavior, latent manifestations or fantasy life. For the purpose of this paper a homosexual will be defined as an individual processing to more overt homosexual behavior than overt heterosexual behavior. This definition was chosen because overt behavior is something that can be clearly understood and defined, where latent or fantasy behavior tends to be more neblous.

It has been estimated that in the United States alone there are at least one million women whose chief sexual outlet is with members of their own sex (Cory, 1964). Homosexuality is found in all social classes, all racial groups and in all geographical areas.

In this paper on the personality characteristics of homosexual women, it will be necessary to briefly review a few of the more important studies of the causes of female homosexuality. Many interpretations as to the etiology of female homosexuality have been proposed by a variety of theorists.

Alfred Adler stresses the female's "masculine protest" which is similar to Karen Horney's "power envy" theory. Both of these theorists believe it is not the penis she does not have that makes the female feel inferior, but that feelings of inferiority are due to living in a male oriented culture. These feelings of inferiority are then proposed as one of the major factors in the etiology of female homosexuality.

Albert Ellis (1965) believes that female homosexuality is based on feelings of inferiority, oral dependency and narcissism. Other theorists such as Berg (1958) and Brown (1966) have stressed oral dependency and lack of appropriate sex-role identification as underlying features of female homosexuality.

Gillespie (1963) in a symposium on homosexuality of both sexes has related the problem of homosexuality to pre-oedipal anxieties and in particular to oral dependent fixations relating to the mother. Gillespie believes that projection of the narcissistic self onto another person of the same sex is another cause of homosexuality. In other words, if the child is fixated at a level where he still only really loves himself, he will, when he gets older, look for a love object that is as nearly like himself as can be found.

Simon and Gagnon (1966) have discussed the need for viewing the personalities of female homosexual in terms of conventional behavior determinants. They believe that within the limits set by a deviant sex-role preference, much of a Lesbian's social behavior can be explained in terms of non-deviant sex-role behavior. In the process of socialization, patterns of aggression in most females are inhibited and dependency needs are fostered. The pervasive influence of the conformity thus fostered seems to be stronger than sexual object-choice. Therefore, Simon and Gagnon believe that except for sex-object preferences, female homosexuals are like female heterosexuals in their patterns of community conformity and behavior. In fact, they stress the point that female homosexuals tend to over conform socially to compensate for their sex-object choice. On the other hand, Simon de Beauvier (1963) has proposed that the female's fight against socially forced passive femininity can often lead to homosexuality. She states that factors such as physiological conditions and psychological states contribute to homosexuality but are not the main cause. Essentially, she believes that the female becomes homosexual in an effort to become a person rather than an object in a male oriented culture. de Beauvier goes on to say that female homosexuality is not a perversion, but a deliberate choice.

Marmor (1965) believes that one possible explanation for the variety of views on homosexuality is that the theorists have based their conceptualizations on samples of homosexuals who have sought some type of therapy or professional help. Marmor also believes that research on trying to delineate a specific type of homosexual personality will fail since there is a multiplicity of causes for homosexuality. Just as research has shown no specific epileptic personality, there is no "typical" homosexual personality.

The preceding studies can be criticized on several different points. First, previous studies have used small samples and this restricts them severely in

obtaining significant statistiscal results, since the personality differences between the two groups are probably quite limited. Secondly, in a majority of the studies, the subjects were either currently in therapy or incarcerated. This type of subject may show gross deviations from the normal population whether they are homosexual or heterosexuals. Thirdly, the techniques used were either like the Rorschach which was designed to tap pathology or like the Kuder Performance Schedule which is a vocational interest test. Neither of these types of techniques are appropriate for trying to obtain normal personality characteristics. Fourth, techniques such as the Rorschach are not easily quantifiable and this makes interpretation quite difficult, particularly when the sample used is quite small. This paper will try to compensate for previous research deficiencies by using (1) a larger number of subjects (2) subjects who aren't currently in therapy and (3) a personality inventory which is designed to tap personality variables of a non-pathological population and that is easily quantifiable.

The basic testing procedures in this research was to send the subjects a packet containing the California Psychological Inventory. The subjects were 46 heterosexual and 46 homosexual females from a large urban area. The subjects were all college graduates and between the ages of 21-50 years. All of the subjects were volunteers.

The California Psychological Inventory is a 450-item, true-false test designed to assess personality characteristics that are important for social living and social interaction. This inventory was designed primarily for non-psychiatrically disturbed subjects. There are a total of 18 scales, each of which is designed to measure one important facet of personality (Gough, 1957). The scales used to differentiate subjects were femininity and Achievement via Conformance. A brief statement about what these two scales measure are: (1) Femininity scale: To assess the masculinity of femininity of interests. High

scores indicates more feminine interests, low scores more masculine, and (2) Achievement via Conformance scale: To identify those factors of interest and motivation which facilitate achievement in any setting where conformance is a positive behavior (Gough,1957).

Each subject was mailed a packet containing an instruction sheet and the California Psychological Inventory. After completing the materials they were to place them in the blank envelope and to seal it. The subjects were instructed not to put their name on any of the materials. The packets were picked up at a specified time and place.

The statistical tests used were analyses of variance between subjects, groups, scales, subjects by groups, subjects by scales and subjects by groups by scales. t tests between the groups for each scale were also computed.

A subjects X groups X scales analysis of variance on the California Psychological Inventory yielded significant results at the .05 level in all three comparisons; groups, scales and groups by scales (Table 1).

t tests were computed between the groups for each scale of the personality inventory. Five of the eighteen scales of the California Psychological Inventory showed significant differences at the P .05 level (Table 2). These scales were Dominance, Good Impression, Capacity for Status, Intellectual Efficiency and Femininity. The homosexual groups were higher on all but the femininity scale. A graph used by Skoda (1965) to indicate the number of significant scale differences needed out of a total number of scales for overall significance showed that five scales out of eighteen on the California Psychological Inventory, is significant at the P .05 Level.

The results of this study indicated a personality pattern difference between homosexual and heterosexual women. However, most of the differences between the groups were slight.

Neither of the groups showed pathological personality patterns. With the psychological inventory used to measure personality variables in this study, scores between thirty and seventy are considered to be in the normal range. Mean scores for both groups are well within these limits. Finding scores within these limits seem to support both Wilbur (1965) and Thompson (1958) in their contention that homosexuality as a clinical entity does not exist. The profile for the groups are slightly different, but as a whole they are within normal ranges and there would be no way to distinguish a homosexual from a heterosexual profile on an individual basis. This lack of a unique profile for homosexuals agrees with Marmor (1965) who contended that homosexuals can have many types of personalities that are within normal limits.

The hypotheses that homosexuals would be higher in the area of Achievement via Conformance was both found to be non-significant. Heterosexual women being more feminine was confirmed in the direction hypothesized.

This research has suggested other areas of enquiry, which could be of benefit in increasing knowledge concerning female homosexuality. A study using a larger and more diversified sample of homosexuals would enable to results to be generalized to more than the well-educated urban homosexual population which was used in this study.

TABLE I

Subjects X Scales, X Groups Analyses of Variance
for the California Psychological Inventory

Source	df	SS	ms	F
Subjects (R)	45	6947.74	154.44	14.98**
Scales (S)	14	25810.99	1843.64	
R X S	630	70952.25	112.62	7.25**
Groups (H)	1	1344.23	1344.23	
R X H	45	9724.04	216.09	1.90*
S X H	14	3284.50	234.61	
R X S X H	630	84047.56	133.41	
Total	1397	202113.19		

* $P \leq .05$

TABLE 2

California Psychological Inventory

Scale	Heterosexual		Homosexual		
	$\bar{M}$	S.D.	$\bar{M}$	S.D.	$\bar{M} - \bar{M}$
Dominance	49.70	12.09	55.09	5.39*	5.39*
Capacity for Status	44.74	12.94	51.87	10.10	7.13*
Sociability	49.54	11.86	50.09	9.55	1.56
Social Presence	53.87	12.04	55.82	9.68	2.65
Self-Acceptance	53.85	11.52	56.70	9.05	1.77
Sense of Well-Being	42.48	13.21	43.17	15.10	.69
Responsibility	43.39	9.18	42.89	10.90	.70
Socialization	42.57	11.47	37.17	11.26	3.40
Self Control	40.15	10.19	42.96	9.65	2.81
Tolerance	47.00	10.37	48.71	11.67	1.72
Good Impression	37.83	10.59	43.20	8.49	5.37*
Communality	50.76	7.63	47.83	11.79	2.93
Hach Via Conformance	42.02	12.37	46.15	9.95	4.13
Hach Via Independence	53.61	12.47	55.22	9.96	1.61
Intellectual Efficiency	44.74	11.08	49.59	12.27	4.85*
Psychological Mindedness	51.98	11.28	52.87	11.38	.89
Flexibility	36.57	11.50	55.22	10.51	1.32
Femininity	52.22	8.37	47.83	10.43	4.39*

P.$\leq$.05

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